classic pilaster and that at Repton. So early is the appearance of this crypt that many have thought it actually Roman, but the simple inspection of the capital, as well as the groining, will show the impossibility of this being the case.

If we look at the outside, our reasoning must be this: as circular and triangular arches used together—and with balluster columns—seems an undoubted mark of Saxon architecture, as is proved by the MSS., and as these are found in execution and in conjunction with strip pilasters—and as these again are found as distinctive marks in Romanesque both in Italy and Germany in the eighth and ninth centuries—I think it is not too much if we consider the architecture of the exterior clearly long antecedent to the Conquest; and if we look at the interior and see architecture older clearly than any Norman, and yet clearly not classic Roman, surely we cannot be blamed if we pronounce this to be part of the old Saxon church. Let the advocates of the opposite opinions remember there is no instance of strip pilasters, balluster columns or triangular arches, in any building which chronicle or charter will prove to be Norman.

Here, perhaps, rested the bones of the great kings of Mercia—here reposed the ashes of the great Saxon saints — here perhaps the Danes caroused through the long winter nights after the conquest of Repton, and before their dreaded incursion into the south—here stood the priory founded by the piety or internal fears of the Norman earls—and here, till the dissolution, were the Secular Canons, whose exertions and learning almost recompensed all the evils that have been attributed to the wealthy monk or importunate friar.

ARTHUR ASHPITEL.

REMARKS ON THE FORM, TREATMENT, AND APPLICATION OF THE DOME IN MODERN EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE.*

On the subject of the proper style and character of the surface decoration of the dome there are natural objects that are very suggestive, only we must take into consideration, and make due allowance for, the difference of size: small objects are dependent on their decoration chiefly, large ones on form, which must not be cut up or injured by decoration. Some delicate embroidery-like ornament that would not interfere with or distort the general curvature of its surface, or disturb the breadth of its repose, would be the most proper. The ornament much used in great works, consisting of a multitude of square deep coffers placed within each other (the object of which would seem to be to make a very small rosette suffice for the decoration of the centre), is a very senseless one in any form of ceiling, and is particularly inadmissible in the dome: it interferes with the general surface until it is lost to the eye altogether: it looks liney, and produces no shadow in any broad or effective manner. The exterior curvature requires the same care: a calm and beautiful repose of light and shade is the great characteristic of the domical surface, and this must be preserved at whatever restraint of the hand of decoration. On the exterior, an unbroken surface, without ribs or dormers or projections of any kind, perfectly smooth, or relieved only by a net or scale-like covering, would, I believe, be greatest in effect. Its beauty is in its spherical curvature, and in the softness of light and shade which it is calculated to produce. Moreover, the meridian-like ribs so much used in great domes are only appropriate on those surmounted with lanterns, to which they converge. Spherical ceilings are, however, susceptible of much variety of sculptural embellishment: they might be appropriately decorated with subjects from the vegetable and animal kingdoms, which might be partially or wholly tinted; but it requires no great effort of judgment to perceive that historical subjects, either in painting or sculpture, so placed, excepting around the base for a few degrees up where they would be nearly perpendicular, are an irrational decoration: some very fanciful and aërial subjects, comprising imaginary beings, genii, or the like, might be admissible in theatres, saloons, &c.; but grave, historical subjects, however artfully foreshortened and disposed for being seen from below, can never look natural, and are improper for such a position; though some subjects, as the Ascension, Transfiguration, and the like, are less objectionable than others. The objection has most force in reference to flat ceilings, but neither on domes nor on vaulted or any other form of ceiling can historical painting be considered proper; and the grand subjects of Correggio and others had been better elsewhere. Neither should a dome or other ceiling be painted to represent the sky. The carved ornaments of the timber-roofed churches representing angels as hovering over the heads of the congregation, formed a beautiful and significant decoration, as it symbolized the highest heavens; but an imitation of the starry sky, though used symbolically, is, I think, an absurdity in a feature the chief object of which is to shut out the sky and excite ideas of comfort and shelter from the weather.

Much of what I have advanced will, I know, sound like heresy, if not apostacy, to many, and I may be deemed presumptuous in arraigning the merit of such works and men; but pure taste and enlightened judgment must, I think, mainly concur in such views, which would not tend to cramp design or clip the wings of imagination, but to guide them into right channels, and secure to their productions, under the sanction of reason, a higher and more satisfactory beauty. We can have infinite variety within the limits of rational design; and the revived architecture of the ancients requires not to be swept away, as some of its physicians would rashly prescribe, and which, indeed, it never will be, but to be purified, refined, ennobled. The most admired buildings in this style are grossly impure, and in no respect more so than in the treatment of the dome; and if the besom, not of destruction, but of correction, were to pass over the domes, not of London only, but of Rome and Paris, and clear away the lanterns, models, and toys that now disfigure their summits, a magical improvement would result in the eye of every genuine devotee of the beautiful and true. If their architects had worked from within outwards in planning their works, and were guided in their general arrangements and choice of form by a desire to obtain the fittest and most beautiful interior, no such features would have appeared, and very different would have been the form and application of the cupola. In all good and true architecture the general form of the exterior follows that of the interior, and is its true expression.

It is quite possible, by adding false and useless features to the essential shell of a building, to make the exterior more sensuously beautiful, i.e., more pleasing to the uninformed eye; and this has too often been done; but its intellectual beauty, is defaced by such treatment; the mind does not approve it; and in reference to the subject under our more immediate consideration, the question must involuntarily arise, why a dome should be shown on the outside that has no relation to the inside, as in St. Paul's, London, and in several of the Parisian churches. If true proportion and beauty require a dome to be placed at a certain elevation inside, that elevation must be the most proper outside, and will be most satisfactory to the inner eye.

When a building is truthfully conceived and faithfully executed, perfect in constructive and proportional grace, we can neither add to it nor take from it, without injury: the veins of life will run through every limb: every part will breathe: addition will be an incumbrance and deformity, subtraction a mutilation and destruction.

It might be pleaded, in reference to some of the false structures to which allusion is here made, that the extension of the cylindrical wall upwards, and the weight of the carpentry of the outer dome, secure abutment to the inner one, as does the brick cone to the inner dome in the ingeniously contrived cupola of St. Paul's; but this is an insufficient apology for their introduction, and does not excuse the falsity of the arrangement, which inevitably detracts from their artistic merit: they are, however graceful, misconceptions, or, at least, impure conceptions: they depart from art in proportion as they depart from truth, which invariably calls for fitness and propriety, and requires a strict correspondence in architecture, as in all else, between interior and exterior. Now, the most beautiful form with which we could crown the intersection of two great naves is, I would humbly suggest, the pendentive dome. Constructive advantages are perhaps in favour of the cross vault, but the former is the most beautiful; and had the centre of the cross in the great churches to which I have referred been covered immediately by it, like that of St. Sophia and the Turkish mosques (which present, perhaps, the grandest interiors in the world), instead of having the pendentive spandrels merely to form the circular base for the upspringing tambour, greater unity would have been achieved, and truer proportions; for the height would have been in due subordination to the other dimensions, and the whole interior effect would have been more noble and satisfactory.

But if we could forget their incongruity, the absence of interior proportion, and the rest, and view them simply as external features, they would yet be far from satisfactory in the eye of taste: the man of pure art-feeling, and sound art-judgment, in contemplating such objects as the circular domed temples of St. Paul's Cathedral or Greenwich Hospital, must feel a secret regret that they had not, after the manner of their Roman prototypes, been built upon the ground, where they would not only look vastly larger and more important, but where, enjoying a more natural position, they would be infinitely more beautiful, besides being of actual use as chapels, libraries, or what not. Placed where they are, such objects have no adequate meaning: no idea, or only a false one is embodied, for most of the miniature imitations of these structures have no interior, or visible available inside, but are merely exterior objects. Now, I believe that no great limb or main feature of a building, such as a tower, should be erected for mere outside show; and I believe also that we might have an equal or greater amount of external decoration if the features devoted to it were made to administer at the same time to interior beauty and use; *i. e.*, that the money spent on steeples, containing nothing, might have been so employed as to produce an appendage to the edifice not only yielding an equal amount of beauty on the outside, but gracefully useful within. With the Gothic spire I meddle not: the governing principle of the style is an apology for it: in the Gothic Church it is in the midst of pointed finials, and all is aspiring together; but the classic column supporting an entablature has no meaning, and therefore no business, up in the air; and the cost of the two or three tiers of columns and spire above our revived Roman churches would have erected a single peristyle, crowned by a dome, of twice the diameter. The rationality of the nineteenth century must, I think, lead to reformation here, and we shall outgrow these senseless practices in architecture; practices tending to please the eye whilst offending the judgment, and which are calculated to bring the whole style in the eyes of the indiscriminating into unmerited contempt. Unmerited,—for the capabilities of the architecture of the ancients cannot, I am convinced, be estimated even from the most celebrated examples in existence: there has, I suspect, never been an adequate amount of real artistic genius applied to it in modern times. In our greatest buildings it has been misapplied,—in temples as well as in palaces. In many of the great palatial edifices of Italy, in still more of the French ones, it has been the bubble of fashion, the creature of affectation: formality and falsehood—the evidence of sacrifice to mere pomp of exterior decoration have everywhere stamped themselves in gigantic deformity. In the greatest works they have been made to administer but to a meretricious pomp, a conventional stateliness,

"Decency and custom starving truth."

* See p. 540, *ante*.

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